



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	10 June 2015
OFFICER	Jason Thelwell, Chief Fire Officer
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Adrian Busby
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	The enclosed MOU sets out a formal arrangement for collaborating with the other Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services.
ACTION	Decision.
RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that the principles within the MOU of collaboration between the Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services be accepted for signature by the Chairman.
RISK MANAGEMENT	The purpose of the MOU is to commit each fire and rescue service to look at collaboration within the Thames Valley as a first option, to reduce cost, improve quality and improve resilience. The MOU does not tie the Authority to this course of action, so represents very little risk.
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	No additional costs.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	No legal implications.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	No implications.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	No relevant issues.
USE OF RESOURCES	The MOU gives officers a clear steer on the first option when considering collaboration; this will require no extra resources.
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	Background The Knight review recommends closer collaboration between blue light and other fire and rescue services as a means of reducing cost, improving resilience and increasing the quality of the service provided to the

Memorandum of Understanding with Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire
Fire and Rescue Services

	community. An identical copy of this MOU has already been signed by the Chairman of Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service.
APPENDICES	Appendix 1: Memorandum of Understanding.
TIME REQUIRED	10 minutes.
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Jason Thelwell – Chief Fire Officer jthelwell@bucksfire.gov.uk 07920 535849

Appendix 1



Fire and Rescue Collaboration in the Thames Valley

A Memorandum of Understanding between the Fire Authorities of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, and Royal Berkshire.

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to establish a clear commitment by members of each of the three fire authorities in the Thames Valley, to the fire and rescue services for which they are responsible operating as preferred collaborative partners.

Background

Members of the fire authorities in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire, and Royal Berkshire regard collaboration as a key element in the process of continuing to deliver important outcomes for communities, whilst balancing their respective budgets in the face of increasing downward financial pressure.

The three fire and rescue services in the Thames Valley already have a solid track record on collaboration - examples of which include:

- Arrangements for over-the-border assistance when responding to emergencies
- Fire Investigation
- A shared procurement service for Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire
- A shared information management arrangement between Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire
- Provision of legal advice by Buckinghamshire to Royal Berkshire Fire Authority's Monitoring Officer
- The development of technical fire safety guidance and training for Fire Protection officers by Oxfordshire for Royal Berkshire
- Out of hours specialist fire protection enforcement advice provided by Oxfordshire to Royal Berkshire
- Joint Driving Centre between Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Specialist line rescue provided by Oxfordshire to Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire

The most significant example of collaboration to-date has involved establishing the Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS). Fire authority members and their senior officer colleagues see the TVFCS as an important focal point around which other collaborative initiatives can be built in the future. This, combined with the previous positive experience of collaboration referred to above, and the immediate geographical proximity of the three fire and rescue services has led fire authority members to conclude that the organisations should operate as preferred collaborative partners.

It is important to note that this Memorandum of Understanding does not represent an absolute commitment to Thames-Valley-only Fire/Fire collaboration. Rather, it is a statement-of-intent which commits the Services to a default position of collaborating within the Thames Valley, unless a clear business case demonstrates that an alternative collaborative option is preferable.

Objectives

Key Objective

Sharing resources on a fair and equitable basis, to support achievement of excellent outcomes for communities across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire.

Supporting Objectives

1. Delivering excellent, cost-effective and resilient services to communities
2. Ensuring necessary capacity, capability and resilience across support functions in a cost-effective manner.

Guiding Principles

1. During the process of developing and delivering collaborative initiatives, fire authority members and officers will always focus on what is in the best interests of the communities they serve.
2. Collaboration will be used as a mechanism to share best practice across the three fire and rescue services.
3. All costs and benefits will be shared on a fair and equitable basis.
4. Governance arrangements will be put in place which properly balance the requirement for effective oversight, with the need to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy.

Councillor Adrian Busby
Chairman – Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority

Councillor Rodney Rose
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue, Emergency Planning and Community Safety – Oxfordshire
County Council

Councillor Colin Dudley
Chairman – Royal Berkshire Fire Authority

Dated: